THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) No Sir. There is however, a strain on Railway finances to meet the requirements of the Railways in full which is mainly due to the lower levels of Budgetary support that we have been receiving till recently and the additional requirement of funds necessary on account of the implementation of the Fifth pay Commission's recommendations.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir. Railways had projected a plan size of Rs.11,000 crores for the year 1997-98 with Rs.3300 crores as Budgetary Support, Rs.3000 crores as Internal Generation and Rs.1650 crores as contribution from the General Exchequer towards social obligations. However, this was not agreed to by the planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance and the plan size had to be reduced to Rs.8300 crores with Rs.1831 crores as Budgetary support (since increased to Rs.2001 crores) and Rs.3419 crores as Internal Generation of Resources.

(e) and (f) The Railways have been able to meet the demands of traffic despite these resource constraints through increased utilisation and improved productivity of assets. The pace of developmental works and the expansion of the Railway network have, however, slowed down somewhat due to the need to utilise the available resources to meet the immediate short term demands/requirements.

(g) Dialogue is continuing with the Ministry of Finance to find ways and means of augmenting the Railway's resources .

International Airport at Srinagar

323. SHRI GULAM RASOOL KAR : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it has been decided that Srinagar Airport will be converted into as International Airport;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether clearance from the Ministry of Defence has been received;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) by what time the Srinagar Airport is likely to be converted into an International Airport ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATRAJAN) : (a) and (b) Srinagar airport belongs to the IAF and Airports Authority of India (AAI) is maintaining a Civil Enclave. The request from the state Govt. for upgradation of facilities at Srinagar airport to cater for international operations has been accepted and the proposal is at the planning stage.

(c) and (d) Yes,Sir. Ministry of Defence have agreed in principle to the proposal.

(e) No definite time schedule can be indicated at this stage.

[Translation]

Telecast of Programmes based on the Lives of Great men

324. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether programmes based on the lives of great men of India are pending for telecast ;

(b) if so, the names of these great men; and

(c) if not, whether the Government contemplate to produce programmes based on the lives of such great men?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) Yes,Sir.

(b) The programmes on the following great personalities have been approved under sponsorship category for telecast on DD-1 and DD-2 channels of Doordarshan subject to availability of suitable time slot;

1. Lord Buddha

2. Maharana Pratap

3. Jagadguru Shankaracharya

4. Mahatma Gandhi

5. Punyashlok Ahilyabai Holkar

(c) Does not arise.

[English]

Allotment of DDA Plots For Office-cum-Shopping

325. SHRI SIBU SOREN : Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Delhi Development Authority has advertised for the allotment of space under the self financing scheme (SFS) for office cum shopping centre on plot No.5 at District Centre, Janakpuri, New Delhi;

(b) if so, the number of applications and amount received in this regard;